



DIGEST

Around and About

SEVEN FINALISTS from the road, County engineer, and facilities departments were to be interviewed yesterday (March 16) to choose a civil service list from which the Board of Supervisors will name a new County engineer. Facilities director Stephen Koonce has also been acting engineer since October 1976. As soon as the Board makes its appointment, the facilities and engineer departments, which have been next-door neighbors at 550 South Vermont avenue, will be formally merged into a single department.

AN EXAM for another top County job is approaching. Today (March 17) is the deadline for filing applications to succeed retiring Irv Morhar as road commissioner. The competition is limited to present road department employees.

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GRIM OUTLOOK IF PROP. 13 PASSES

IF CALIFORNIA voters next June 6 approve the Jarvis-Gann initiative slashing real estate taxes, and if the state legislature fails to act swiftly to replace the lost revenue, Los Angeles County faces a grim future of layoffs and reduced services.

That somber warning was issued by CAO Harry Hufford to County employees and the Board of Supervisors.

The Jarvis-Gann measure, which will appear on the ballot as Proposition 13, would go into effect July 1.

"This amendment to the state constitution would reduce County property tax revenue by 58 percent," Hufford said. "Unless the state provided alternative funds, and quickly, the County would have to eliminate all non-mandatory functions such as parks, beaches, museums, probation camps, agricultural services, and others. We also would be forced to reduce mandatory services including health care, welfare, and justice. And we would have to lay off 20,000 County employees from our work force of 76,500."

Hufford released letters showing that the Jarvis-Gann restrictions also would handcuff operations in County special districts.

Sewer Maintenance

The amendment would cut off 70 percent of sewer maintenance district property tax funds. "This would fund only 35 positions compared with our present budgeted staff of 124," wrote acting County engineer Stephen Koonce. "With these limited funds, we could carry

out no preventive maintenance on pumps and lines, and sewer stoppages, as they occur, could not be corrected expeditiously. Eventually the whole system would fail and sewer service would not be available for approximately two million County residents."

Fire District

The consolidated fire protection district estimated that Jarvis-Gann would cost the district 61 percent of its revenue. This would mean the end of all paramedic rescue service and the closing of at least half the district's fire stations.

Flood Control

Chief engineer A. E. Bruington said passage of the Jarvis-Gann initiative would lead to the layoff of about 800 of the 1,300 flood control district employees. He added: "There could be no major repairs to existing facilities—dams, debris basins, channels, storm drains, pumping plants. Ultimately these would become inoperable, and they would cease to provide flood protection."

Street Lighting

Road commissioner Irvin Morhar forecast the lighting districts would have to remove 70 percent of their street lights if the Jarvis-Gann amendment is approved. Only alternative would be to raise replacement funds with two-thirds approval of the benefiting property owners.

Public Library

Jarvis-Gann passage would mean closure of 45 of its 93 libraries, ac-

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HUFFORD GIVES BUDGET PREVIEW

Around and About

(Continued from page 1)

LOCAL 660's board of director has named former DPSS worker Steve Coony as general manager of the union, replacing Harry Gluck who departed Feb. 20 for Sacramento and chairmanship of the state Public Employment Relations board—a spot occupied by onetime County ERCommissioner Reginald Alleyne until he resigned from the dissention-ridden board. The three-man board oversees collective bargaining for 440,000 teachers and state employees.

WORK WILL begin next week to replace the 50-year-old ammonia refrigeration system at General hospital with a safer freon system. The \$185,000 project will convert the ice-making equipment and 11 walk-in refrigeration rooms in the hospital kitchen area.

AND PLANS have been okayed to transplant the John Wesley oncology medical training and support labs to the second and third floors of the County-USC Med Center outpatient clinic building. Estimated cost: \$160,000.

COUNTY LIBRARIAN Carol Moss says that employee training films, formerly kept in the personnel department library (now permanently closed) are still available for loan at the Hall of Records. The films give tips on communications techniques, human relations, leadership, motivation, handling grievances, and how best to manage one's working time. Would-be borrowers should call 974-6546 to arrange a loan.

CAO HARRY HUFFORD forecast a continuing clampdown on County hiring and spending as he gave the Board of Supervisors (Feb. 7) a preview of his budget planning for 1978-79. His version of next year's budget will go to the Board May 2.

Hufford said his budget will recommend no increases in the property tax rate (although he assumes a 9 percent rise in assessed valuation on taxable property will provide some new revenue to meet inflationary costs).

Every department, he said, has been asked to reduce its 1978-79 budget 2.4 percent below this year's level. "This is a target," Hufford said, "and nothing more. Our final recommendations in May will vary both above and below this figure for different departments, depending on their circumstances."

Hufford said that, in line with Board directives of the past two years, he will attempt to lop another 2,000 positions from the County payroll in 1978-79. The County work force, which totaled 83,300 in January 1976, has now shrunk to 76,500 (not counting the 2,500 CETA employees who have been on the payroll for several years).

The CAO cautioned that his

Only One Amendment

ONLY ONE proposed County charter amendment will appear on the June 6 ballot—an amendment repealing section 47, which requires that County pay be "at least equal" to that in private industry for similar work.

As the deadline for placing charter amendments on the June ballot passed last Tuesday (March 14), the Board of Supervisors declined to submit an amendment that would have cut veterans' preference from 10 points to 5 points in civil service examinations, and would have applied the preference only to veterans seeking entry-level jobs within ten years after leaving military service. The change had been recommended by the civil service commission.

budget plans do not consider possible voter approval of the Jarvis-Gann tax limiting initiative June 6. "If that happens," he said, "we will face an entirely different ball game."

(See page 1 story on effects of Jarvis-Gann amendment.)

Audits Scheduled

THE BOARD of Supervisors has adopted a long-range schedule of management audits that will send teams of experts into 47 County departments over the coming ten years.

Most of the studies will be done by the CAO's audits division. Some, however, will be contracted to private consultants in cases where (1) the study requires special technical knowledge, (2) the CAO's unit is pressed for time, or (3) the most recent management audit was done by the CAO's unit.

CAO Harry Hufford said studies by his audits division are more economical, costing \$22 per man-hour compared with \$47 for outside consultants.

In the coming year the CAO's division will do four studies—of the assessor, building services, and County clerk departments, as well as a feasibility study on creating a General Services department. Private firms will perform audits on the communications department and Harbor General hospital.

The 1979 schedule calls for CAO audits of the flood control, fire, farm advisor, weights and measures, and purchasing and stores departments. Private consultants will study the County counsel and personnel departments and County-USC Medical Center.

Hufford told the Board that the work of his management audits division in the past two years had resulted in savings of more than \$9 millions and led to creation of the collections department.

Morhar Retiring from Road Dept.

ROAD COMMISSIONER Irvin Morhar will be among the heavy outflow of longtime employees retiring at the end of March. Morhar has served with the County for 31 years, the last 11 as road commissioner.

Other departures announced by the board of retirement include:

With more than 35 years service—

Joseph Euell and Clinton Stomsvik, road department; Thomas Rehm and Joseph Werner, fire department; Victor Dituri and T. C. Peterson, Jr., County engineer; Jayne Armstrong and Allen Neiswander, health services; Stewart Marsh, personnel; Bernard Farbman, DPSS; Junius Hanazawa, probation; Arthur Sanders, health services; Walter Wilson, Museum of Art; Frank Hronek, district attorney; Darryl Flanery, regional planning; Edward Maya, flood control; George Maynard, Museum of Natural History.

Retiring with 30 to 35 years service:

PROBATION—Morton Allenstein, Hisaye Matsumune, Walter Lott, Elmer Roberts, Nino Castenada, William Dailey, Herman Matt, Dorothy Shaffer, Edward Lassiter.

FIRE—Herbert Foster, Angelo Brunelli, Thomas Barbre, Robert Straub, George Anderson, Lawrence Lee, Donald Berry, Ray Flowers, Leslie Foote, Charles Wiest, Arthur Clensay.

SHERIFF—Elmer Baker, Jack Greenlees, James Farrell, Robert Ray, Patrick Shirley, Dave Harris Jr., Charles Hammond, Ralph Anderson, Dora Britton, Eldon Perry, La Rue Shephard.

ENGINEER—Glen Detweiler, Edward Jennings, Bruce Michaels, Raymond Bentson, Alexander Bond, Marjorie Weber.

ROAD—Whitney Judkins, Glen Davisson, Norman Gillan, John McBride, Warren McCartney.

FLOOD CONTROL—Chester Magness, Charles Mascio, Joseph Rauckhorst, Eugene McMurray, Nelson Thompson.

HEALTH SERVICES—Beatrice Bush, Christell Hogan, Theresa Maggio, Baby Lee Moreland, Gertrude Echols, Winner Armstrong, Arrean Landreaux, Mary Martinetti, Evelyn Brandt, Rex Wilkerson.

DPSS—Barbara Jones, Joseph Kaufler, Frank Erdoes, Esperanza Barnett, Doshie Palmer.

Few Staying on Past Age 65

THE END of the mandatory retire-at-65 rule for County employees apparently has meant a change in life style for only a handful of oldtimers—probably fewer than 150 a year—according to the County retirement division.

In the first place, says Ed Morris, chief of the retirement services division, most County staffers retire several years before reaching age 65. The average retirement age for general members is 59 (with an average 21½ years service).

Among the 18 or 20 County workers who reach age 65 each month, Morris said, about half of them choose to retire at that time. The remaining 9 or 10 work on for various personal reasons—because there is nothing else they would rather do, or because they came to work for the County in their late fifties and want to continue until they have accumulated at least ten years service, qualifying them for partial subsidy of premiums under the retirees' medical insurance.

The former rule requiring County workers to retire at 65 was knocked out by state Assembly Bill 568, which Governor Brown signed last Sept. 16.

The Board of Supervisors, in adopting rules to implement the bill

ASSESSOR—John Schroyer, Thomas Vagenas, Leo Campion, William Cass, Jr.

Others include Edward Hoffman, beaches; Frank Chopik and Robert Crawford, regional planning; Eleanor Harker, collections; Warren Ligon, parks; Raymond Ballantine and Lawrence Nosco, municipal court; James Pino, superior court; Carl Norell, communications; Kenneth Stephens, agriculture; Clara McAdams and Dolly Nizzi, schools; Gregory Lins, facilities; Robert Disterdick, library; Bert Dreebin, district attorney; William Goodall and Vitout Shilala, mechanical; Davis Lear, Board of Supervisors; Ophelia Ortiz and Ralph Van Gogh, County clerk; Albert Salo, air quality management district.

(Dec. 20), set up this procedure for employees who choose to stay on the County payroll past age 65:

- At least 90 days before his 65th birthday, the employee must notify his department head in writing that he wishes to continue working.

- If the department head believes the employee is competent to continue on his job, he issues a "certificate of competency" and sends copies to the employee and the director of personnel.

- At least 90 days before each succeeding birthday, the employee and department head must follow the same procedure.

- If the department head declines to issue a certificate of competency, his decision is final.

- In determining competency, a department head may order physical or psychiatric examinations.

Population Edges Up

L. A. COUNTY'S population is creeping upward—slowly. Latest report from the regional planning department shows the county on Jan. 1, 1977, had 7,042,500 residents. That's 47,800 more than the county had a year earlier. San Fernando valley grew by 13,600, San Gabriel valley by 9,600, the Antelope and Santa Clarita valleys by 3,600. East Los Angeles dwindled by 2,800.

Prayer Breakfast Set

ACTOR DEAN Jones will be principal speaker at the annual Good Friday prayer breakfast March 24 in the Courthouse cafeteria. The affair will begin at 6:30 a.m., conclude at 7:50 a.m. Tickets at \$2.75 are available in rooms 203 or 428-F at the Courthouse.

What Jarvis-Gann Provides

THE SOCALLED Jarvis-Gann initiative would add Article XIII-A to the state constitution. It provides, in brief:

- Taxes on real property would be limited to one percent of full cash value. (At present property taxes total about 3 percent of full value.)
- The one percent limit does not apply to bonds and other indebtedness previously approved by the voters.
- "Full cash value" means the County assessor's valuation shown on the 1975-76 tax bill under "Full Cash Value." Property not already assessed up to the 1975-76 tax level may be reassessed to reflect that valuation.
- Property valuation may be increased not more than two percent a year to reflect inflationary trends.
- The County assessor will set the value of newly constructed property or of any property going through a change of ownership.
- The legislature may not impose any new ad valorem taxes on real property or any tax on sales of real property.
- The legislature may increase other taxes by no less than a two-thirds majority in both houses.
- Counties, cities, and special districts may impose special taxes on themselves by a two-thirds vote of the people; however, special ad valorem taxes on real estate and taxes on the sale of real property are excluded.
- The restrictions on enacting new taxes go into effect immediately. The other provisions go into effect July 1.

INITIATIVE

(Continued from page 1)

According to the County library system. Of the library's 997 fulltime positions, 585 would be terminated.

Hufford said that, while the amendment does not specify how the much reduced property taxes would be divided among County, cities, schools, and other taxing jurisdictions, he assumed they would be distributed in proportion to the current share received by each jurisdiction.

A Windfall for Some

Hufford criticized the Jarvis-Gann amendment for providing tax relief mostly to the owners of business and commercial property, instead of to low- and middle-income home owners. Business owners pay 63 percent of the property tax, home owners 37 percent.

"Revenue will have to be raised to provide basic health, education, welfare, and justice services required by state or federal laws or

the U. S. Constitution," he said. "Funds also will be necessary to insure that local government can pay legal obligations such as contracts, leases, and payments on nonvoted debt."

Effect of Behr Bill

If the Jarvis-Gann amendment is defeated at the polls June 6, and if proposition 8 legalizing lower property taxes to home owners is approved, then the newly enacted Senate Bill 1 would go into effect.

SB 1, authored by Senator Peter Behr and signed by Governor Brown March 3, would cut home owners' taxes 30 percent by increasing the home owner's exemption.

SB1 directs that the state take over the home owners' share of County costs for Medi-Cal and welfare, and that the County pass on all these savings to homeowners taxpayers. Thereafter the County may increase its property tax collections by no more than the annual inflation rate, nationwide, in the cost of government services.

Workers' Comp Staff Beefed Up

THE BOARD of Supervisors has approved (Feb. 28) hiring 22 more claims adjusters, attorneys, and support staff in an attempt to stem a fast-rising tide of costs in the County workers' compensation program. Losses have risen from \$11.7 million in 1971-72 to more than \$58 million in 1976-77.

The Board received the recommendation for more staff in a CAO audit of the personnel department health operations. The audit declared more claims workers are needed to maintain "prompt and continued supervision of disabled employees . . . and closer medical control."

The added attorneys, it said, will permit a "more aggressive defense policy to deter the promotion of litigation by private attorneys and . . . to force more questionable cases to trial instead of terminating cases through compromise settlements, which is the current practice."

The audit noted that rising costs could be traced to recent court findings and state laws, and urged the Board of Supervisors to continue pressing its efforts in Sacramento to revise the wording of workers' compensation laws.

County of Los Angeles

DIGEST

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